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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 13 May 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. PEERTHUM (Mauritius)
(Vice-President)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) [125] (continued)

- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly and allocation of items: request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General [8] (continued)

- Special economic and disaster relief assistance: draft resolution [86] (continued)

- Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations [117] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

/...

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(b) Letter from Ghana

(c) Letter from Luxembourg

(d) Letter from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

(e) Draft resolution

- Programme of work

In the absence of the President, Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (ARTICLE 19 OF THE CHARTER) (A/45/1004/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the first item on our agenda for this morning, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/45/1004/Add.1, which contains a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General informing him that, since the issuance of his communication dated 29 April 1991, Benin has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM SUBMITTED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/241 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: In connection with this item, a note by and a report of the Secretary-General have been circulated in documents A/45/241 and A/45/241/Add.1. In his note the Secretary-General, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure, requests that an additional item of an important and urgent character be placed on the agenda, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara". Owing to the nature of that item, he also requests that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee for consideration.

(The President)

In the circumstances of the present case, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda, can be waived?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I also take it that the Assembly wishes to include an additional item to read as follows: "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", and to allocate that item to the Fifth Committee for consideration?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

AGENDA ITEM 86 (continued)

SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/45/L.48/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT: We shall next consider the question of emergency assistance to Bangladesh. In this connection, a draft resolution entitled "Emergency assistance to Bangladesh in the wake of the devastating cyclone" has been issued as document A/45/L.48/Rev.1.

The Assembly will also consider at its next meeting, under agenda item 86, the question of special emergency assistance to Haiti. In that connection, a draft resolution entitled "Special emergency assistance to Haiti" will be submitted and circulated shortly.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/45/L.48/Rev.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/45/L.48/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/45/L.48/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 45/263).

Mr. AHMED (Bangladesh): I speak overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude. The Bangladesh delegation is deeply touched by the Assembly's expression of solidarity with our suffering millions at this hour of our great sorrow. Through you, Sir, I thank all delegations for their unanimous adoption of this resolution, to which we attach the utmost importance.

The human tragedy in the aftermath of the worst cyclone ever in our living memory has been colossal. It has left over 140,000 dead. This figure may rise as more information becomes available from remoter parts. Many more have been rendered homeless. More than 10 million people have been affected. In many areas, infrastructures have been totally destroyed. Standing crops, awaiting what might have been a bumper harvest, have been washed away. Extensive damage has been sustained by telecommunications installations.

(Mr. Ahmed, Bangladesh)

The Government of Prime Minister Mrs. Khaleda Zia has mobilized all the resources, personal and national, at her command to address the massive task that now confronts us. You are well aware of Bangladesh's many and varied constraints. We cannot meet our present needs by ourselves. We need prayers. We need support. We need understanding. That is why our Prime Minister has launched her appeal to the international community for assistance.

Already a comprehensive list of requirements for immediate relief, short-term rehabilitation and longer-term reconstruction has been prepared. The preliminary assessment shows the requirement for relief and follow-up rehabilitation to be $1.4 billion.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has already undertaken several measures for which we are all in his debt. Apart from issuing a worldwide call for assistance, he was instrumental in organizing a visit to the affected region by Mr. M'Hamed Essaafi, the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. He and his colleagues at UNDRO are performing their tasks in a most commendable manner. A number of United Nations agencies have also become actively and constructively involved.

The adoption of this important resolution by this Assembly will without a doubt add impetus to our endeavour. It will, we hope, serve positively by acting as a catalyst for global efforts to support and assist Bangladesh.

Many have responded, and many more are responding most generously now. They include States and Governments, non-governmental organizations, men and women of God, schoolchildren, even ordinary people in the street. They come from near home and from faraway places. Diplomatic colleagues in New York have written me personal letters expressing deep distress. Many have conveyed their condolences to me in person. We cannot thank them all individually, for

(Mr. Ahmed, Bangladesh)

which we apologize, but their expressions of solidarity will give us the strength and fortitude to overcome our crisis. With your support, understanding and prayer, Sir, and those of our other brothers and sisters in the international community, we shall indeed overcome.

Our requirements, as you know, are great. It is our hope that adequate help will be forthcoming. This is an age of global unity, and one way to show that unity is when the pain of some is shared by all so that, when it is alleviated, all can share the resultant satisfaction. We again thank you, Sir, and the delegations present here, for having adopted the resolution.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 86.

ITEM 117 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/714)

(b) LETTER FROM GHANA (A/45/991)

(c) LETTER FROM LUXEMBOURG (A/45/999)

(d) LETTER FROM DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY AND SWEDEN (A/45/1001)

(e) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/45/L.49)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 117, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations".

Members will recall that at our 73rd plenary meeting, held on Monday, 29 April, I informed the Assembly that members would meet in informal consultations on the question of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, with a view to preparing a

(The President)

broad-based resolution. Members will also recall that, at our 74th plenary meeting, held on Friday, 3 May, I further informed the Assembly that consultations were still proceeding.

I am pleased to inform you now that members have concluded their informal consultations, and a draft resolution has been circulated this morning as document A/45/L.49. In this connection, I should like to point out that this item has been included in our agenda for this morning at the request of a number of delegations which have asked that the draft resolution should be considered and decided upon at this meeting.

In fairness to all members, I wish to consult you before proceeding to discuss and take a decision on the draft resolution before us. I should like to quote from rule 78 of the rules of procedure, in regard to proposals before the Assembly:

> "... As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting. ..."

In view of the desire of members to dispose of this item expeditiously, I seek your concurrence with the request that we should proceed to discuss and take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/45/L.49, even though it was distributed only this morning.

In the absence of any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Fiji to introduce draft resolution A/45/L.49.

Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji): In my capacity as a Vice-President of the General Assembly and as chairman of the informal consultations, I have the honour of introducing to the General Assembly the draft resolution entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields", which appears in document A/45/L.49.

The draft resolution is the result of a number of weeks of arduous work on the part of the many Member States which contributed to its formulation. Discussion of the subject commenced on Tuesday, 16 April, when the President of the General Assembly initiated informal consultations on agenda item 117 in preparation for the resumed meetings of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly which had been scheduled to begin on 29 April. Thereafter the President charged me with conducting the informal consultations on his behalf.

The first set of consultations under my chairmanship was convened on Thursday, 18 April. Since that date, informal consultations have been held on a daily basis as delegations initially sought to reach agreement on a text that could be adopted at the resumed meetings convened specifically for that purpose. Unfortunately, the complexity of the issues under review did not allow for a speedy conclusion to our labours. I believe nevertheless that the extra time granted to us has been well spent, and that the draft before the Assembly is a worthy product, albeit one derived from a lengthy experience.

At the start of the consultations, the delegations involved agreed to my suggestion that we should use the proposals submitted by the Group of 77 as a basis for our work. These proposals are to be found in document A/45/991. Subsequently, the European Community and the Nordic countries also submitted written proposals, which appear in documents A/45/999 and A/45/1001.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

During the course of our consultations, other delegations made informal papers available, and I wish to mention the contributions of Australia and Japan in this regard. In addition, a number of other delegations participated actively and helped to fashion the agreed language of the resolution which is before members. While the final text draws heavily on the original proposals of the Group of 77, it is also reflective of the combined efforts of a wide spectrum of Member States.

I believe that the draft resolution which is before the Assembly represents an important step in the process of revitalization and restructuring of the economic, social and related sectors of the Organization. The draft resolution contains significant recommendations about the organization and methods of work of the Economic and Social Council which, if fully and effectively implemented, should contribute to the Council's reclaiming the role assigned to it in the Charter. The draft resolution identifies issues to be addressed in the future and lays down a timetable to that end. It contains carefully crafted arrangements for regular reviews, so as to ensure that the course which has been charted is followed. Above all, it recognizes that revitalization and restructuring is a necessary process but also a long one, which will require the continuing and active involvement of delegations and Secretariat alike.

I would like to thank all the delegations which were involved in these consultations for their unfailing courtesies extended to me at all times, and the Secretariat staff who provided invaluable support and guidance. On behalf of the Member States which took part in the informal consultations, I am honoured to commend draft resolution A/45/L.49 to the Assembly for adoption.

The PRESIDENT: I congratulate the representative of Fiji on the successful completion of the consultations he has so ably directed.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/45/L.49. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/45/L.49 was adopted (resolution 45/264).

The PRESIDENT: May I remind delegations that, in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. I call first on the representative of Ghana, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana): The Group of 77 welcomes the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/45/L.49 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The Group of 77 took the initiative to present proposals in this regard out of a keen sense of the need to restructure and revitalize the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields in order to make it more responsive to the development challenges and objectives of the 1990s and beyond, as defined in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, contained in General Assembly resolution S-18/3, and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, as well as in the Charter.

The consensus we have achieved today has been made possible by the general agreement that this undertaking must be seen as a process entailing a step-by-step approach. Thus, at this resumed session, the General Assembly

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

focused on measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. Important decisions have been made with regard to the organization and reporting procedures of the Council, which should give it a new sense of purpose and direction, enabling it to fulfil its charter and other responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

At the forty-sixth session, the General Assembly will focus of the review of the subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields. The Group of 77 hopes that the same constructive spirit that characterized our deliberations at this resumed session will be brought to the Assembly's consideration of this question. Further steps in this process will include a resumed forty-seventh session to consider the composition of the Council, and a review of the complementarity between the work of the Council and that of the General Assembly at the forty-seventh session. A general review will be undertaken at the forty-eighth session. In all this, we should be guided by the basic principles upon which we have agreed, so that the measures that we adopt in the whole process will be focused, coherent and consistent.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize that the Group of 77 sees the restructuring process as primarily an intergovernmental responsibility which must be pursued in that context. We also wish to emphasize that the principle of equitable geographical representation, on the basis of which membership of the various bodies and organs is determined, will be respected in all cases.

Permit me, Sir, to pay tribute to Mr. Winston Thompson, whose wise and skilful guidance of our deliberations enabled us to achieve the results that all Members present happily celebrate. Throughout the difficult and protracted negotiations, he showed heroic patience and understanding, and we

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

are indeed very grateful to him. We also wish to thank our partners for their cooperation and understanding, and we hope that our next effort will be equally rewarding and interesting.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of the Nordic countries.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): During the last few weeks, we have together gone through a long and thorough negotiating process. All countries and groups have made valuable contributions to this process. Constructive proposals and a willingness on all parts to work together in a spirit of common objectives and in an atmosphere of compromise have made it possible for this resumed session of the General Assembly to agree on a substantial reform programme. The Nordic countries wish to pay a cordial and sincere tribute to the Chairman, Mr. Winston Thompson, for his patient and tireless efforts during the informal consultations.

The document that is before the Assembly contains a number of important elements which could have great consequences for the United Nations. A preliminary assessment of the document warrants the conclusion that substantial changes will be introduced in the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, perhaps for the first time. Therefore the Nordic countries give their full support to the reform programme that members today have adopted.

The Nordic countries particularly appreciate the measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. These measures could turn the Council into a vital and forceful centre for the activities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. Of particular importance are the measures dealing with the high-level and

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

coordination segments of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. We believe that these measures could contribute to more meaningful and more relevant debates in the Council, with a real impact on developments. They could also lead to a much-needed improvement in the coherence of the United Nations system.

What we now have to do is to continue our efforts to ensure that the reform measures for the Council that we have agreed upon are effectively implemented. We must take measures as early as this year to make certain that the new Council we are creating will function properly from the start in 1992.

The Nordic countries have consistently maintained that we have to embark on a long-term United Nations reform process, a process which, besides a number of immediate reform measures, must encompass a wider perspective and a more precise agenda for the future. This could, perhaps, have been spelt out even more clearly in the document which is before the Assembly.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

It is, however, clear that reforms of the Economic and Social Council are not enough. Nor can they be seen in isolation. The work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the General Assembly should be enhanced through appropriate reform measures. The work of the General Assembly should also be strengthened in order to have a real political impact. The Nordic countries, therefore, attach great importance to the reviews foreseen regarding the subsidiary bodies and the complementarity between the Council and the General Assembly. Without concrete reform measures as a result of these reviews the reform process will give only limited results.

The Nordic countries are confident that the continued reform process will achieve further substantial results if we can carry on our work in the positive and constructive spirit which has characterized these meetings. Substantial results are called for also in the future if we are to forge an instrument which is effective and strong enough to deal with the expectations of the world and which can help us achieve our common tasks, namely, to combat poverty and other fundamental development problems and to manage the increased global interdependence.

To conclude, I should like to reiterate that the Nordic countries stand ready to continue to participate actively and constructively in the reform process that will now be set in motion. We look forward to being able to endorse in this Assembly further concrete reform measures, aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

Mr. LAVROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The resolution just adopted by the General Assembly cannot be

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

described as routine. What we are approaching, in essence, is the practical realization of the consensus decisions regarding ways of implementing action taken on economic development at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. The negotiations have revealed the various approaches to solving a number of problems considered during the last month, including politically sensitive problems. It is important that at critical moments all delegations demonstrated the political will and desire for constructive cooperation, which ultimately determined the success of the negotiations. We appreciate the contribution made by all delegations, particularly by the members of the Group of 77, which not only became the initiators of this measure, but which also submitted interesting documents, which were at the centre of attention in the negotiations. I should like particularly to highlight the outstanding personal contribution at the unofficial consultations of the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, Ambassador Thompson.

The document adopted today contains a solid package of measures the practical implementation of which will make it possible seriously to enhance the authority of the social and economic activities of the United Nations and determine its new role in multilateral economic dialogue. We note with satisfaction that the work of the renewed session of the Economic and Social Council will be aimed at overcoming sectoral particularities of the problems of the United Nations in the economic, social and humanitarian areas. The Economic and Social Council has to ensure a synthesis of the results of the work of the individual sectors and organs in the political recommendations for the General Assembly.

It is also important that this strategy of taking further steps for continuing the reforms is being carried out. In our view, the stage by stage

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

implementation of these measures should become part of a broader process of reform of the United Nations as a whole and of the system of the specialized agencies.

We shall constructively cooperate with all countries to see to it that this process is based on the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter and that it will promote the implementation of its potential, which is far from being exhausted at present. As a result of the agreements achieved, we have a good earnest of progress in the future, and the Soviet delegation is ready to promote further efforts to improve the social and economic activities of the United Nations in order to enhance its effectiveness and adaptation to the new political and economic realities.

Mr. FEYDER (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States.

The European Community and its member States welcome the important results which have been achieved following the work done over the past few weeks on the question of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. This result may be found in the document annexed to the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. It is the first time in the history of the United Nations that it has thus become possible to bring about a series of reforms which will make it possible more profitably, more rationally and more effectively to organize our work in the economic and social fields.

The United Nations should now be in a better position to discharge its important present and future responsibilities in these fields. The reforms agreed upon imply an in-depth reorganization of the work of the Economic and

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

Social Council. They also imply a more consistent and rational structure and a more promising preparation of that work.

But the agreement concluded goes beyond a decision on a series of essentially organizational measures. First, it is also based on a series of principles, guidelines and objectives. These indicate clearly the spirit and foundation on which reforms are to be undertaken and they are important milestones in carrying out that restructuring.

The European Community and its 12 member States consider, in this context, that it is important for all to agree that these reforms must be carried out as part of a restructuring and revitalization process which is continuing. This organized process must have the effect of strengthening the transparency, flexibility and adaptability of the organization and, therefore, of its coordinating strength. The course of action thus chosen must also lead us gradually to effective participation in our work by all the protagonists in the economic and social life, governmental and non-governmental, including organizations of regional economic integration.

In the view of the 12 member States, it was essential that a time-table and specific criteria for future work be established. This should lead us to consider, at the next session of the General Assembly, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council. The European Community and its 12 member States are determined to undertake the necessary preparatory work in the coming weeks.

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

This timetable also covers the work on complementarity between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council which will be done in the General Assembly next year. The composition of the Economic and Social Council will also be reconsidered by the Assembly at its next session. It was also agreed that we would proceed to a structural reform of the Secretariat. Lastly, a comprehensive review of measures adopted will be undertaken at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

For the European Community and its 12 member States, this success has a broader political significance as well. First of all, it confirms the excellent climate of cooperation that exists among Member States in the economic and social fields. Secondly, it confirms that real progress can be achieved on the basis of consensus rather than by a pointless strengthening of majorities. It shows the existence of a common and unanimous political will to make the United Nations an instrument for more effective discussion and action. It also shows that Member States, far from being intimidated by certain past failures, have learned from them. This is also how we interpret the approach taken, namely, that of setting more realistic goals in the immediate future while placing the action undertaken within the framework of an ongoing process.

Convinced as we are of the importance of the mission the United Nations must carry out in the economic and social fields, the Twelve began preparatory work for this exercise in January of this year and have held a considerable number of informal meetings. They have contributed significantly to the results that have been obtained, first, by making available to delegations a document reflecting their position and, secondly, by participating actively in

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

the negotiations that have taken place. We are delighted that many of our proposals have been incorporated in the document just adopted.

The Twelve wish to thank all the delegations that have made this success possible. We should particularly like to emphasize the credit that should go to the members of the Group of 77, which took the initiative behind this reform action last December and played a key role in the negotiations. We should also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Awoonor and Mr. Kufuor of Ghana and to Ambassador Umer of Pakistan, who expressed the Group's positions in such an able manner and in such a constructive spirit. Our special thanks go to Ambassador Thompson of Fiji, who, in the course of the past four weeks, conducted negotiations with a talent, patience and calm that impressed us all. Tribute must also be paid to all who have demonstrated special interest in this complex task and who, with their imaginative contributions, helped to overcome the difficulties encountered.

The agreement reached today can strengthen the broader spirit of reform that exists in the United Nations. While strengthening that spirit, it also demonstrates the increased confidence Member States have in the adaptability, vitality and dynamism of the United Nations - that is to say, in its ability to cope with present and future challenges.

Mr. SEZAKI (Japan): My delegation would like to join earlier speakers in expressing its gratitude with regard to the resolution we have just adopted. That resolution is the result of long and hard negotiations among us, which reflected the importance we have all attached to it. Indeed, by adopting the resolution, we have once again embarked upon the formidable tasks of revitalizing the United Nations in the economic, social and related areas.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

The task ahead of us is full of challenges. The result of this pledging session is only the first forward step in a long process. The establishment of a consolidated session of the Economic and Social Council is a significant achievement, but we cannot take full advantage of it if other arrangements in the area remain unchanged in the future. First, we have to pursue vigorously the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council. Unless we significantly streamline the Council's agenda, the new arrangement will only mean a further burden on its work and will not contribute to the efficiency we would like to see in it.

Secondly, the subsidiary bodies in the economic, social and related fields and their reporting arrangements represent another area in which substantial restructuring is needed. In this respect, the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) must be examined, especially as regards its relation to the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The work of the General Assembly, and especially the work of the Second and Third Committees, must be reviewed with a view to avoiding duplication and to streamlining their procedure.

While the reform process is intergovernmental in nature, that does not negate the responsibility of the Secretariat in making its work as efficient as possible. The Secretariat should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude but should vigorously pursue its tasks in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and such relevant resolutions as General Assembly resolution 41/213.

During the negotiations, my delegation, among others, emphasized the importance of holding the sessions of the Economic and Social Council in New

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

York, as well as the question of redistributing the current seats on the Council. We hope that those matters will be reviewed seriously in the future.

Lastly, I cannot conclude my statement without paying a high tribute to Ambassador Thompson of Fiji, without whose efforts and perseverance we would never have reached an agreement. Ambassador Thompson deserves our special appreciation.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America): It is a great privilege and honour for me today to speak on this subject on behalf of the United States delegation, of the United States Government and of the over 200 million Americans who have the privilege and honour of being citizens of the host country to the United Nations. It is an honour for me and for our colleagues today to talk about the resolution we have just adopted, which represents several weeks of intense but serious work, and to compliment all members on the quality of the resolution, the quality of the progress we have made and the work we have accomplished. That work has been marked by a spirit of compromise and cooperation and by a spirit of consensus, which has been commented upon by all the preceding speakers.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to note particularly and with deeply felt appreciation the leadership given to our work and to our group by His Excellency the Ambassador of Fiji, the Honourable Winston Thompson. We could not have got where we have in the time we did without his effort and his wisdom.

(Mr. Marks, United States)

From the beginning my delegation believed, along with many others, that we had an opportunity this year to achieve modest but very real success. We have done exactly that. We have moved; we have achieved something with many implications for the future. As has been noted, we consider this to be a first step in a significant process. We hope that the resolution, aside from its own virtues, will give a great impetus to that process.

As I have noted, my delegation believes that the resolution achieves in a sense only modest objectives, but they are important, not only for their own value, but because they are modest. We decided deliberately to concentrate on the heart of the question of reform of the economic and social activities of the United Nations - the Economic and Social Council itself. By concentrating on that body, we have been able to reach agreement on reforms which have great implications for the future activities of the United Nations in the economic and social areas.

We have specifically agreed on important changes in the Council's sessional and organizational arrangements. These are important changes which carry great hope for the future. They also create new responsibilities. The resolution creates new responsibilities for delegations, with regard to how they behave in this reorganized Council to achieve the objectives we hope to achieve. It also places new responsibilities on the secretariat, both in terms of changes the secretariat must make within itself, but also in terms of changes we are not even sure of yet; as the Council changes, the secretariat will have to change in the future.

The resolution also has important implications for the Council's subsidiary bodies. We have made a commitment to deal with that matter in the near future.

(Mr. Marks, United States)

As well as having implications for the secretariat - changes in its working level, organization and schedule - the resolution has implications for the General Assembly in the near future.

Nevertheless, we hope and believe that the changes contained in the resolution will lead to our one single, hoped-for result - a better organized, more effective and more efficient United Nations in the economic and social areas.

In my delegation's view, the resolution is particularly notable for the specific, concrete changes that have been made in the sessional and organizational arrangements of the Economic and Social Council. These are real.

Many delegations have also been concerned about the question of the principles that will direct the changes we have made now and future change. Much discussion has gone into the organization and drafting of this set of principles, and we are all confident in them. We are particularly hopeful that these principles will in the future guide our work of reform in a manner that will be free of political ideology and old-fashioned partisanship, and will direct us towards work that will again lead to a better organized, more efficient and more effective United Nations in the economic and social fields.

Mrs. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria): My delegation attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. It is therefore very important for us to see the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the United Nations in these fields enhanced.

(Mrs. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

In my delegation's view, the resolution we have just adopted is a very concrete and positive step in the ongoing process of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in these fields.

I should like to add that participating in the arduous process of informal consultations was a very rewarding experience for my delegation, because of the constructiveness of the contributions made by all partners, because of the spirit of compromise that prevailed and that enabled us to find consensus solutions and, last but not least, because of the able and patient leadership of the Permanent Representative of Fiji, Ambassador Thompson, in his capacity as Chairman of the informal consultations.

My delegation looks forward to continuing working on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields constructively and creatively.

Mr. ZHANG Yesui (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/45/L.49. We believe that this is an important step in the process of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. We hope that the introduction of the new Economic and Social Council and other reform measures will be implemented effectively and will achieve the desired results.

The Chinese delegation has always actively supported reform by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. We believe that the objective of reform is to improve the efficiency of the United Nations, so that the Organization will respond more effectively to the need for international cooperation in the economic field, particularly with regard to the development needs of the developing countries.

(Mr. Zhang Yesui, China)

We believe that reforming the United Nations in the economic and social fields is a very complex question, involving many matters that are complementary and related to each other. It also involves almost every aspect of the activities of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Therefore, in this respect there should be a step-by-step approach to reform and we should not rush into anything hasty. If we do so, we shall never achieve any of the desired results. We note with satisfaction that the resolution we have just adopted by consensus basically reflects that approach.

We believe that the resolution represents a very good beginning to reforming the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Therefore, we believe that the views of various parties must be sought on any important measures in that regard, and such measures should be adopted by consensus.

Before I conclude, I wish on behalf of my delegation to express our special thanks to the Permanent Representative of Fiji for his excellent work in the process of informal consultations. His experience and diplomatic skills, as well as the patience that he demonstrated in the process, contributed greatly to the progress we achieved in the consultations. My thanks also go to all the countries and groups of countries that participated in the informal consultations for their contributions.

(Mr. Zhang Yesui, China)

Our particular thanks go to the Group of 77 - which actually represents 128 countries - for its special efforts and contributions.

It is our hope that the spirit of constructive cooperation demonstrated during this process will continue to be manifested in the coming process of reform.

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 117.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: At its next plenary meeting, to be held on Thursday 16 May, the General Assembly will consider the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 157, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara". It will also consider under item 86, "Special economic and disaster relief assistance", a draft resolution on emergency assistance to Haiti.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.